

REFUSE AND RESIST.

NEWS FROM LOCAL ANTI-POLL TAX GROUPS

No.3

PRICE BY DONATION

April/May '90

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

TOMORROW SEES THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE POLL TAX IN SCOTLAND, ALSO ON THIS DAY THE POLL TAX COMES INTO EFFECT IN ENGLAND AND WALES. TENS OF THOUSANDS OF NON-PAYERS WILL MARCH THROUGH LONDON AND GLASGOW AGAINST THATCHER'S TAX.

Over the past year, since the tax was introduced into Scotland we have fought hard and well. We have put the tax and those who implement it into total chaos, mass non-payment is a reality. We have much to celebrate and also much more to fight for. This battle is far from over.

In England and Wales the battle is just beginning. As we have seen from Norwich to Lambeth, people are taking up the fight and in some cases they are doing this in a literal sense. **Our support must go to those all over England who have taken up the struggle. We must support the tactics which they have chosen to use. We must defeat the Poll Tax by all means necessary.**

In Scotland we have already seen two demos organised by the Scottish Anti Poll Tax Federation - both drew large support - 30,000 plus in attendance. But, the March demos will be the biggest show of anger against the Poll Tax so far. The Government and those Councils, be they Tory, Labour, or S.N.P. controlled, must be shown that under no circumstances will their hated tax be accepted.

The Government is on its last legs with crisis after crisis hitting it. Firstly the Tories' eleven years reign must be ended and their tax must go with them. But, we should also make sure that their likely successors, the Labour Party should not be allowed to walk away from the part they have played in introducing and maintaining the Tax in areas they control.

Joining the Demo, however, is not all that can be done. If you have not already done so you should join your local Anti Poll Tax Union. If there's not a Union in your area and you would like to get one on the road, then contact the local Federation and they will help organise a meeting. Put your power into action, show all those who thought that the working class were dead that we are alive and kicking, and ready to fight any action against our interest. **Don't Pay, Don't Collect, Keep on Fighting.**



RED ALERT

35,817 claimants on Income Support are earmarked for deductions of £1.85 (Single) and £2.90 (Couple), the new Rates from April 9th. Strathclyde Region has deducted this list from the first batch of 252,737 cases now sent to the Sheriff Officers. It is vital that Anti-Poll Tax Groups begin lobbying Social Security Workers to follow the lead of some C.P.S.A. Branches in England and refuse to implement the deductions. It is not expected that action over Poindings will commence till after the May Election Farce. Although, as we go to press, there is news about Eastwood & Renfrew Poindings threatened in April.

STOP PRESS: Acting under Council instructions, Police have placed last minute changes to the previously agreed route of the Federation March. The Executive have been left with the discretion to defy Police re-routing (via High St.) despite attempts to commit the Federation, if practically possible.

ENGLISH UPRISING

SEE CENTRE PAGES

Editorial:

At a recent meeting of Woodlands A.P.T., a number of criticisms of the contents and editorial policy of Refuse and Resist were expressed. The editorial group would like to answer the points raised.

1. Some people felt that Refuse and Resist lacked information re local groups. R & R exists to provide such info but can only print reports if they are forthcoming. We would urge any group that wishes to report on local activities to contact us.

2. It was suggested that R & R was attempting to set itself up as opposition to the Strathclyde Federation. There is not truth in this at all. The Federation has worked hard in the anti-Poll Tax campaign and R & R supports most of its activities. But the paper will criticise whenever criticism is due. Besides, it's our policy to print any articles or letters concerning the anti-Poll Tax campaign. Should these include criticism of the way the Fed. runs its affairs, so be it.

3. The "Rant & Rave" column (inadvertently called the gossip column in the last issue) was thought to be petty. We'd like to apologise to anyone who might feel this way - it just seemed a bit of harmless fun to us.

4. The final point was that the paper was being used by a member of the team for personal attacks on the Federation. This is not true at all. An editorial team of five collects and edits all material from a wide variety of individuals and groups. No one person determines the content of R & R.

We exist to provide information, and we welcome letters, reports and articles from any person or group that wish to contribute to R & R. So put pen to paper and express your views, we can only print what is sent in to R & R.

ABERDEEN AGAINST THE POLL TAX

As you are probably aware Grampian Region have been particularly vicious in their pursuit of non-payers, yet official figures published at the end of January show that 160,000 people are over 3 months in arrears. That means they are now attempting to recoup the debt from over 30% of the population. These figures have doubled since November showing that more and more people are joining the campaign by cancelling payments.

Our group unanimously rejected standing candidates in the forthcoming Regional elections. There were 2 main reasons for this decision. Firstly it would be divisive and split the anti-poll tax vote

and secondly it would require us to divert all our energies and finance away from other essential activities. What we have agreed to do is send a questionnaire to all candidates standing in the regional elections and use the results to target key Councillors and prospective Councillors in the run up to the elections. If you want a copy give us a phone on our Hotline (0224 625562).

We will stop all pointings if at all possible and if it is the wish of the person being pointed but quite clearly promises by groups that they can stop all pointings are quite unrealistic.

Sheila Maher

To: Russel Taylor, Secretary,
Scottish Anti-Poll Tax Federation.

I am replying on behalf of Aberdeen Against the Poll Tax to your undated letter relating to the "World in Action" programme shown on 29th January.

1) Pointings cannot always be stopped, as unlike Sales, there is no legal requirement for the Sheriffs Officers to give notice of pointing. The latest leaflet produced by the Scottish Federation is factually incorrect on this point. The four day notice requirement applies only when they cannot gain access because the house is empty. If there is someone in the house over 16 years of age they are entitled to use locksmiths to enter. This has in fact happened to members of ours. I would refer you to the Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987, Schedule 5 Paragraph 3.

Pointings can be physically stopped if notice is given or appointments are made, but if Sheriffs Officers turn up at someone's house and know there is someone in, (although sometimes they can be persuaded otherwise), they can gain access and execute the pointing before large numbers of people can be mobilised to prevent it. It is misleading to say that every pointing can be stopped.

2) Many individual non-payers, for a variety of reasons, such as wanting to test out a point of law through appeal, or because they know they have nothing which can be pointed, will want a pointing to go ahead. This was the situation with the pointing which was televised. In such situations we will not stand by and ignore the pointing. If the individual concerned wants the support of our group in terms of advice, a token demonstration or some other support, we will provide it. We will not impose our preferred tactic of preventing the pointing if the individual wants it to go ahead. This may not be a situation you have encountered as yet, but when you are at the more advanced stage of recovery procedures that we are at, it will no doubt arise. We would never attempt to persuade anyone who wanted to resist a pointing to allow it to go ahead for the convenience of the media. I am surprised that you could believe that this could be the case, which you seem to do.

In relation to the programme itself, you must recognise that we have very little control over what is filmed, and even less over what is finally transmitted. For example, World in Action chose not to show the number of people we had as a token demonstration at the pointing. They also chose not to show that the Sheriffs Officers had to call the Police before they were able to get away from the pointing.

In relation to the individual concerned in the programme, Sue McLeod has been subjected to great harassment by Sheriffs Officers, including a previous attempted pointing which was prevented by about 70 members of our group. Your description of her as "that unfortunate woman" is demeaning and belittling to a respected, committed and courageous member of our campaign.

Yours in Solidarity, Graham Sullivan
for Aberdeen Against the Poll Tax.

OK FOR Lothian, OK FOR STRATHCLYDE!

In Refuse & Resist No. 1 a resolution submitted to the October Aggregate of the Strathclyde Federation was printed. The Resolution was passed and the Executive circulated questionnaires for local groups to return listing the Contact address and tel. numbers for the group and where and when they met. 6 months later this list has still not been published. In Lothian, the Federation lists all the 'Hotline' numbers of the local groups in their Newsletter (as well as their central 'Hotline'). Active anti-poll tax groups, longstanding or new, must be reassured that many of the delegates at Aggregates and Conferences are from Bona Fide active groups. It is also vital, with action over Pointings likely from May, that the next Federation newsletter lists local 'Task Force' Hotline Numbers in addition to the Federation office and that of a few select Executive Members.

Keith (Ibrox/Cessnock)

LOTHIANS ANTI POLL TAX FEDERATION PHONE TREE

If the Sheriff Officers are seen in your area and you need assistance mobilise the entire Federation. Begin by phoning the first available number on the list below. If the first number is not available move to the next number and so on until you get a reply. Thereafter it is the next person's responsibility to phone the next number and so on until the phone tree is complete. Go back and phone any unavailable numbers later. (All numbers are G31 prefix unless otherwise stated).

Federation Secretary: Russell 552 4673, V-Chair: Andy: 661 6115
Lothians Claimants Union: 557 0718 Day.
Gorgie/Dairy: 337 7863, 337 8274 Eve, 225 2424 Ext 5091 (Evelyn).
Lochend: 658 6336, 661 6367, 553 7335, 554 4659, 661 1102.
Moat/Stenhouse: 444 0098.
Haymarket/Tollcross: 228 6347, 228 4838, 229 8156, 337 2264.
Stockbridge/Newtown: 332 3818, 332 7547, 343 2777, 558 1950, 220 1145.
Prestonfield: 668 3136, 662 4195, 667 6557, 668 2020, 660 9005, 667 9158.
Leith/Piling: 553 4275, 553 7099.
Niddrie/Craigmillar: 661 6741 (Graham).
Abbeyleith: 652 2058, 652 0808, 661 3138, 661 4832.
Merchiston/Morningside: 557 0718 Day, 229 9591 Eve.
West Lothian: 0506 842022.
Musselburgh: 665 8858, 665 7162, 665 7140.
Currie/Balerno: 449 5473.
Wester Hailes/Sighthill/Broomhouse: 453 5766 Eve.
Broughton/Inverleith: 556 6291, 556 5953, 556 0903.
Pilton/Muirhouse: 551 1314, 315 2679, 336 5259, 552 6824, 336 5636.
Rosalyn/Wardleburn: 552 0193, 552 8584, 652 8546, 552 5251, 552 0212.
Inch/Gilmerton: 664 7272, 658 1850.
Scenes/Marchmont: 229 9552, 447 6593, 667 7101, 668 3502, 447 7467, 657 8123.
Clermont/Drumbar: 339 7629, 317 7123.
Drylaw/Telford: 332 9803.
Southside: 662 4064, 228 5273 & 556 8838 Eve.
Fort/Newhaven: 553 4375, 553 4735, 554 0714.
Dalkeith/Woodburn: 663 9840.
Bonnyrigg: 663 0005, 660 4579, 663 1154, 663 3225.
Gorebridge: 49 20193, 49 22197 (not Thursdays).
Mayfield/Easthouses/Newington: 663 7777, 650 4480.
Colinton/Mains/Firhill: 441 4482.
NALGO Members: 225 4377 (Martin).
SNP Pentlands: 444 1158, 442 1878, 449 7453.
Art College: 229 1442 Day (Simon).
Stevenson College: 447 8357 Eve.
Dalkeith Unemployed Workers Centre: 663 0400 Day, 663 9840.
Edinburgh Trades Council: 556 3008 Day.

NALGO - STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

Lothian Regional NALGO members, working on the Poll Tax collection, are set to take ½ day strike action on April 3rd against the arrestment of wages and the freezing of bank accounts of workers refusing to pay the Poll Tax.

The strike will go ahead despite the intimidation by management and an offer by the council of a one-off payment of £400 to those NALGO workers who agree to carry out the Tories' dirty work.

Given the position that Lothian NALGO have taken - isn't it about time that Strathclyde NALGO started to actively campaign for strike action against this tax? The leadership of Strathclyde NALGO, which is affiliated to the anti-Poll Tax Federation, have, for the last 2 years, been turning up at aggregates and conferences and telling us, "how difficult it is to organise the workers in Poll Tax offices". Indeed, we have heard the Strathclyde Federation trade union officer (herself a NALGO member)

refer at various times to the Poll Tax workers as "low paid" and "backward".

The strikers in Lothian, whose rates of pay are the same as those of workers in Strathclyde, will be surprised to hear their colleagues referred to in these terms.

NALGO has a policy, on paper, which supports industrial action in support of non-payers "where necessary". It has never been more "necessary" for NALGO to support the non-payers in Scotland than now. With the Poll Tax crumbling around the Tories, a wave of industrial action could seal its fate.

To Lothian NALGO we say, "Well done and keep up the fight". But to Strathclyde NALGO, "STOP THE BULLSHITTING - GET UP OFF YOUR KNEES AND STRIKE AGAINST THE TORY POLL TAX."

STEVE (Dennistoun APTU)

Deflating Love



Sheriff Officers operating in Dalkeith, Midlothian, in early February return from their expense account pub lunch to find their car tyres have mysteriously deflated. To make matters worse the sheriffs' slap-up feed had been interrupted by angry denunciations from anti-poll tax protestors. Since his lackeys seem to be doing so badly perhaps Sheriff Officer, Hugh M. Love, would appreciate some advice - his home telephone number is 031-447 1247. He's usually in at around 3 a.m.

GO FORTH AND MULTIPLY

Grangemouth Anti-Poll Tax group has been going since last June with regular fortnightly meetings.

We've just held a successful public meeting in Bo'ness with about 25 folk turning up. The meeting went well with everyone enthusiastic about starting up a group of their own. We met with them the next week to help get the group off the ground.

Berny (Grangemouth)

Postscript

2 Sheriff Officers were hounded in Pilton on Friday 23rd March by about 6 anti-poll tax activists. 2 other residents joined the fray and attacked the startled Sheriff Officers, chasing them back to their car.

CHASED OUT!

A guerilla war has been raging between non-payers and Sheriff Officers in Lothian Region ever since the state thugs made their first visits to non-payers homes in early February.

The initial attempts by H.M. Love & Co. to carry out pointings in East Lothian were met by well-organised opposition. The Sheriff's men called on non-payers without any warning. But, anti-sheriff car patrols linked to 'Scumbuster' base by C.B. radio ensured the Sheriff Officers were chased and harried at every turn. Their cars were blockaded, had their tyres let down and vaseline smeared on the window screens. The Sheriff Officers called in the police and two arrests were made, but protestors were not deterred. A report from Prestonpans recounts that Sheriff Officers were forced to flee from an angry crowd wearing balaclavas!

Sheriff Officers, Gray & Scott, fared no better when they started harassing non-payers in Edinburgh. Their attempt to carry out a pointing on Paul Smart in Jeffrey Street ended in abject failure when, on the 7th March, 300 anti-poll tax campaigners blockaded not only the tenement stair, but the entire street.

This opposition has led to the Sheriffs changing tactics. In Edinburgh at least they now seem to have largely abandoned attempts at immediate surprise pointings. Instead they are concentrating on hand-delivering threatening letters. These letters claim that they had called to effect a pointing but were unable to gain entry. In most cases a blatant lie, since the letters are being generally delivered by individuals, many of whom are office staff (to be legal a pointing requires a Sheriff Officer plus a witness).

As they quickly move from one area to another delivering letters, it's difficult for the anti-poll tax activists to catch the sheriff officers in the act. But, resistance continues. Active local groups such as Broughton/Inverleith and Stockbridge/New Town have flyposted their areas with anti Sheriff Officer hotline numbers.

In my group, Stockbridge, we've tried to visit everyone who's phoned. This has led to more volunteers for our anti Sheriff Officers phone tree and more offers to distribute leaflets round the doors. The Lothian Anti Poll Tax Federation, too, has established a central hotline number, staffed 10 am. - 4 p.m. every weekday and advertised by stickers.

Sheriff officers have also started freezing bank accounts, so far mainly in the Royal Bank and Bank of Scotland. A 150 strong demo on March 8th outside the Royal Bank of Scotland denounced the account freezings, and on 15th March 70 people occupied the Bank of Scotland on Frederick Street in solidarity with a nonpayer whose account had been frozen. In Merchiston/Morningside the local anti poll tax group picketed The Royal Bank on 15th March and sent in a delegation to demand that the bank manager give two days advance warning of any bank account freezings.

Latest figures show that...non payers in Lothian have not been intimidated. The Region admits it has sent out summary warrants to 98,000 people. And, Councillor Keith Simpson believes there are, in addition, 60,000 more summary warrants which the Region is due to send out, but is meanwhile "sitting on". Plus, the thousands who are not on a register, which the C.C.R.O. admit is now 3 months out of date.

We are winning!

Mike (Stockbridge/New Town)

ENGLISH EXPLODE

The English version of Anti-Poll Tax resistance is now well under way. Anger and militancy has generated the creation of hundreds of adhoc local Anti-Poll tax groups, in Tory heart lands & revolting Inner Cities.

The volume of resistance is overwhelming, centred on saturation local leafleting; the sieges at Council Meetings setting Poll Tax Rates and in turning 'upside down' a respect or compliance with authority. We present some reports and snippets of a much bigger story:

There are major differences between the Civil law in England and Wales compared to Scotland. A newsletter of the Pembury Anti Poll Tax Union in Hackney South explains that:

If you don't respond to the Final Demand, they must go to a Magistrates Court for a Liability Order. This allows them to write to you demanding information like your employers name or address. A £100 Fine could be levied for those who fail to respond in 14 days. They can't go for Bank accounts, but they can try and go for Income Support deductions (£1.75 single; £2.75 couple). The other alternative is to involve the

NETHEREDGE ORGANISED

At the moment we're busy strengthening our local non-payment community support group, consisting of local street and workplace reps (people prepared to leaflet their street/workplace and keep them informed about what's happening, we also have a telephone network of local people willing to support each other).

The group is federated to 22 other local groups through 'Sheffield Against the Poll Tax'

From: Netheredge Against The Poll Tax,
P.O. Box 446,
Sheffield S1 1NY.

WEYMOUTH WON'T PAY

Weymouth A.P.T. recently held a meeting which attracted a massive 1,000 angry residents in what is commonly regarded as Tory heartland. The following week, an amazing 100 people turned up for the first committee meeting of the Weymouth Campaign!

In Weymouth, a housewife, Sheila Jackson, organised the peaceful protest by the South Dorset Action Against Poll Tax. She said that there was no justification - other than political opportunism for claiming that the campaign was a Militant conspiracy. "You will find all over the country that the main body of the angry are ordinary people".



Bailiffs. The Law is less favourable than Scotland on restricting goods they can "lay claim" to. As a final resort, "willful refusal or culpable neglect" could lead to being jailed for 3 months.

A combination of vast numbers of Non-Payers, and the declared opposition of Social Security and Council Workers (backed by strike action) will snarl up attempts at such debt recovery.

Councils such as Lambeth aren't likely to even bill residents for 6 months and now have to adjust their computers again for the £8 - 16,000 group of Pensioners now with Rebate entitlement. Although the Law is different, English and Welsh resistance is inspired by the message from Scotland, that 95% of non-payers have not had the Tax collected from them a year into Non-Payment.

Spur to Action

April is getting closer, and the campaign is hotting up - with a tremendous feeling that the Poll tax can and will be beaten by mass non-payment and non co-operation. Since our thousand-strong Public Meeting at the end of last year, our number of Street Reps has increased to 450; over 6,000 people have now signed the Non-Payment Pledge; We held a successful demonstration (despite atrocious weather) of 250 people on February 3rd, and are now preparing to leaflet EVERY home in the borough during March, calling for no-one to pay the Tax.

Haringey Anti-Poll Tax Union....

Hornsey & Wood Green A.P.T.,
c/o Box 40, 187 High Road, N22.
South Hornsey A.P.T.,
c/o 9 Oxford Road, N4
Tottenham A.P.T.,
c/o 72 West Green Road, N15 (081 802 9804)
Green Lanes A.P.T.,
c/o 72 West green Road, N15.

Strong feelings throughout Haringey -

Last summer 50,000 people in Haringey defied registration, refusing to register for the tax by the July deadline. Despite the Council's new powers to collect information, many thousands held out until intimidated by the threat of fines - and 7,000 people have received fines. The anger this produced was shown when a thousand people attended our public meeting last November.

OXFORD DAWNS

Since Oxford A.P.T. was set up in the summer of 1988, as a 12 person committee, we have come a long way. It's clear, however, that a lot of work is needed in the next few months to ensure the success of the campaign. The city council has now set the Poll Tax rate at £489. Many people cannot and will not pay this tax. We are trying to get everyone involved in the campaign, under the slogan, 'Don't Pay - Don't Collect'.

Oxford Anti-Poll Tax Federation has just had a successful rally that was attended by 800 people, with many turned away through lack of space. Dave Nellist, M.P., was the main speaker

and his call for non-payment was loudly cheered. At the forthcoming Labour march against the Poll Tax in Oxford city centre, we will be trying to get speakers who advocate non-payment onto the platform.

Even in the surrounding Shire districts, campaigns are springing up. A woman in Witney now has a list of 150 pledged non-payers who responded to a phone call that she made to her local radio station!

We are growing more confident of winning every day. We are trying to establish local groups throughout the city. Most areas should be covered within the next few months.

Dave Scholes - Oxford A.P.T.

Hackney Aggro

The Anti-Poll Tax demonstration at Hackney Town Hall on March 8th grabbed national news coverage. It was called as a protest against Hackney Council's involvement in the Poll Tax and the setting of the Poll Tax rate at £499, even with £10 million of cuts in education and social services. The week saw demonstrations all over the country but Hackney's was the larger and more violent with over 5,000 people involved. There was a mixed reaction from local people to what happened, despite what the press tried to put over. People wanted to know why was it in Hackney that the demonstration ended up as it did.

We have to remember that the council decided the rate two days before the 'public meeting' by holding a secret meeting without members of the public being told. Then on the day of the demonstration they upset Town Hall workers (who walked out in protest) by fortifying the Town Hall and having police and sniffer dogs occupying it. On the night of the demonstration they allowed 25 people into a public gallery which is meant to hold 100 and had no communication with the demonstrators outside. The only communication the public had was with the lines and lines of police, pushing and shoving people and eventually baton charging the crowd which included many women and children, senior citizens and one person who was knocked

off his crutches. It's no wonder the demonstration turned angry!

As for the claims of the press that it was all the responsibility of outsiders, out of the 60 people arrested, only 20 were from outside Hackney. The real outsiders seemed to be the rows upon rows of police and dogs, who turned up in large green coaches from all over London. It seems the trouble has ended up as a smokescreen for the massive opposition to the Poll Tax. Only by getting organised with our local groups can we channel our anger and let other people voice their opposition to a Tax most people never asked for.

Holmleigh Road Area Newsletter
(Holmleigh Road Area Against the Poll Tax)

OUTFLANKING RIOT COPS

A magnificent turnout of 9,000 at Colchester at an Anti-Rate Setting Demonstration was attacked by Riot Police. A 'snatch squad' apprehended the march organisers, and in the panic of unprovoked Police wielding truncheons, the crowd fled down a narrow side-street. John, an activist in Derby A.P.T., picked up a megaphone and urged people to individually regroup at the Town Hall. The vast majority turned up and the Councillors made aware of the anger of the Protestors.

Paul (Woodlands)

On Saturday 2nd March 5,000 marched in Taunton vowing mass non payment! In Stroud in Gloucestershire the Tory council were forced to abandon their first meeting to set a rate after a mass demonstration. The reconvened meeting was moved to the local leisure centre so as to better cope with the expected large number of observers. 1,000 people turned up to lobby and were met by a police and security operation costing in the region of £10,000. As the speeches were relayed to the crowd outside the meeting, there was booing and chants of "can't pay, won't pay", "won't pay, don't pay" and shouts of "resign, resign".

NEWSTATESMAN & SOCIETY 16 MARCH 1990

We were at Lambeth town hall on Friday night, where 2,000 people gathered to protest, and where far fewer people later rioted. Were the rioters outside agitators? No: many were local agitators with no attachment to this country's political system whatsoever. They are part of an anarchist subculture, living rough or in dilapidated squats. For them, a "community charge" means running full pelt down a street with a brick in your hand and a "pig" in your sights. They are certainly not members of Militant—an organisation that demands sobriety and discipline.

In fact, there were perhaps only 50 hard-core leftists at the demonstration, although they formed its nucleus. The demonstration was "organised" only in the sense that newspapers were tipped off about where the action was likely to be that night (there was a protest at Southwark town hall the same night which got very little coverage). Only a handful of the leftists were selling *Militant*, and there were no Militant banners.

Outside the central core were the "genuine" protesters, carrying home-made banners. "Not Militant, just angry," read one. "Brian Redhead tans against the poll tax," said another. "Say no to poll tax, it's unjust," urged a third. Its holder was a quiet 14-year-old middle-class girl, there with her mother. They knew about the demonstration, they said, because a leaflet had been pushed through their door. They didn't know who had published it. Other people said they had read about the protest in the local paper. On the fringes of the demonstration were the sight-seers; a loose mass of people, many of them black (and therefore probably local).

Many of the people present were properly sceptical about this sort of thing. Earlier in the evening, outside Southwark Town Hall, there was this revealing exchange:
Speaker: Do you want the poll tax?
Crowd: No!
Speaker: Do you want this Tory government?
Crowd: No!
Heckler: Do you want a Socialist Worker?
Crowd: No!

ANTI-POLL TAX ACTION AND COMMUNITY RESISTANCE IN NORWICH

On March 2 a meeting of Norwich City Council met to set the poll tax rate (£365). Outside city hall about 2,000 people demonstrated their opposition and anger to this unpopular authoritarian tax.

We demanded our right to attend the public meeting which was being denied by the police presence. But eventually the police had to admit 100 people, who filled the public gallery. The meeting was stopped after 3/4 of an hour of songs, chants and a paper-storm of torn up finance reports! (Outside city hall several windows were smashed by defiant, frustrated people who were denied entry to the public meeting.

Police arrested eight people, three on incitement to violence, four on burglary. Conveniently arranged to the cosy reds-under-the-bed picture painted by the police, already addressed by the great escape of seven prisoners from Norwich Gaol that same evening! Charges were dropped pending investigation, possibly due to the refusal of T.V. companies to hand over without warrant, film of the protest, and be, as a T.V. spokesperson said "Agents for the police".

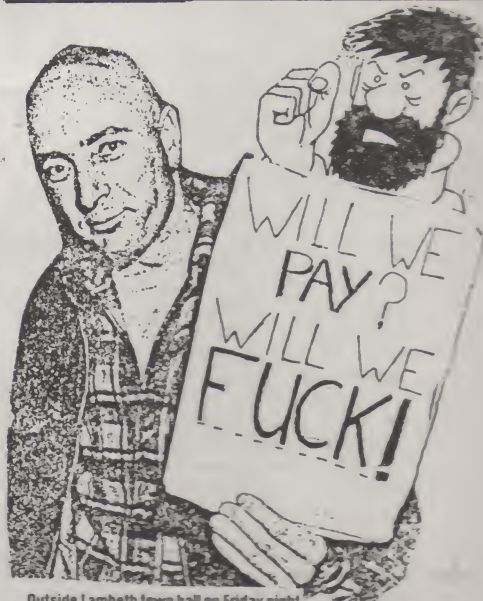
Four community anti-poll tax groups federated in the Norwich Anti-Poll Tax union have grown out of eighteen or so months of action, leafletting and benefit gigs. Several more

Norwich groups are forming. Groups in Cambridge (where the poll tax office apparently caught fire!), Ipswich, Colchester, Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth are being joined by groups in many Norfolk towns and villages. In Norwich, the community groups are producing their own newsletters and leaflets and counter-information on the bureaucratic gibberish of poll tax.

News from Scotland on non-payment and door-to-door canvassing, the ambulance and Birdseye strikers, plus several demonstrations in the city have brought us to popular support for non-payment by March in Norfolk and Norwich. The city mayor and police have pressured local shops and council sponsored centres to remove promptly any bill posters and slogans.

After the Tuesday protest, we held a Norwich A.P.T.U. meeting where a proposal was offered for discussion in the community groups, which proposed supporting more groups and workplace groups.

No party or political group dominates in the Norwich groups. There are party political members such as the S.W.P. and Militant as well as independent people all against paying the poll tax. Decision making in the community groups cannot be separated from the autonomous local groups in a federation. In meetings a consensus agreement is used more than simplified yes/no votes. This way of decision making gives us the solidarity to collectively oppose the poll tax.



Outside Lambeth town hall on Friday night

STRATHCLYDE FEDERATION AGGREGATE - MARCH '90

After a report back from England there was some discussion about a press release from the Federation condemning the violence of outside agitators. The Fed claimed to have also condemned police violence. Drew McEwan (Govanhill) thought we should be condemning Thatcher's violence - the violence of poverty. A vote was suggested at some point, but the discussion didn't seem to go anywhere and there weren't any clear conclusions made. The Fed have issued another press release calling for a peaceful demonstration on the 31st.

The police have now given permission for the route of the march after trying to keep it to the backstreets. The march is being supported by the Glasgow Council of Tenants' Associations, the Scottish Green Party and the N.U.S. Workers from Yarrows are bringing their Trade Union banner after a turnaround in support over a few weeks when a petition of 250 was collected. The Shop Stewards Committee aren't parting with any money yet.

There was quite a lot of reports from the local anti-poll tax groups. Notably a group in Bellsmyre, Dumbarton, has managed to get £1,000 from the District Council to set up an anti-poll tax helpline. An anti-poll tax stall at an International Women's Day event at Drumchapel Shopping Centre got a big response and many people were planning to come to the march. Some of the local "youth" have been out spraying Anti Poll Tax Slogans, as well as their own gang's name.

Local groups were urged to leaflet NALGO members to vote for Roger Bannister for General Secretary of the Union as he is against the Poll Tax - well he wouldn't run a mile for it anyway! Central Regional Council have been getting the D.S.S. to ask people for the Monday Books back from non-payers (or maybe they stop issuing them?) The Council have ignored legalities by bypassing Sheriff Officers. C.P.S.A. leadership won't support organised resistance to benefit arrestments and there are few Federation members in the union. Non-payment in Glasgow now stands at 42.5%.

Mark (Woodlands)

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Ibrox/Cessnock APT put forward a motion at January's aggregate asking for clarification of the Strathclyde Federation's position on internal federations of groups within it (such as the North Pollok and Springburn federations). As it now stands, of the two, only Pollok sends delegates and is, presumably, affiliated. However, the position of these groups is unclear; i.e. should they be allowed to be represented at Federation as a separate group, different than the groups that make it up?

The argument against representation is that why should a federation of groups be represented at federation level (and above) when the groups that make it up are also represented. Local groups should associate as they see fit at all

levels, but why should these associations be assumed to be different from the groups that make them up. The argument for was put by the Pollok Federation delegate who said that it did a lot of good work and that if the Federation decided against representation then he could not vote at aggregate meetings.

The reason that all this has been brought up is that the aggregate decided not to pass the motion but to refer it to the next conference (where the Pollok Fed. would have five votes). However, a purely consultative vote was taken (which was against the motion) in order to show the aggregate's feelings on the subject and allow Ibrox to withdraw the motion if it wanted to.

Unfortunately the Ibrox delegates reported to their group that the motion had been defeated at the aggregate, so Ibrox did not inform the Fed. if it wanted to withdraw the motion or not. At the next conference the motion was not in sight. Since Ibrox has not withdrawn the motion it should have been voted upon at the Conference; it was not. Since it wasn't, it brings up two important questions:

1. Why was it assumed that the motion was withdrawn when Ibrox didn't get in touch with the Federation (and vice versa), and
2. Is the communication between local groups and the Strathclyde federation all it could be?

The answer to the second question, I think, is no. To improve matters somewhat (and to stop things like these happening again) more comprehensive minutes could be produced and sent to all groups in advance of the next aggregate.

Ian (Woodlands)

STRATHCLYDE FEDERATION CONFERENCE

The fifth federation conference at Shettleston on 13th February was extremely boring and amazingly the same as the others I have attended over the months. The following three points are, I think, the most important to come out of it:

1. The debate on whether the federation should stand candidates (or give support to candidates standing for local groups) in the forthcoming regional elections.

Anyway, the motion calling for support for standing candidates (from Langside college APTU) was defeated, although, of course, local groups can stand candidates if they want.

2. It was agreed to picket banks, etc. to put pressure on them not to arrest bank accounts, etc. and to contact the people working in them and their unions. The students loan campaign was held up as an example of what is possible by using these tactics.

3. The formation of a trade union sub-committee to co-ordinate trade union activity and encourage workplace anti-poll tax unions. Speakers made it unintentionally clear that while ordinary workers were more than willing to get involved, the union bureaucracy showed where their interests lie by hindering the mass non-payment campaign whenever they could. The

GhostBuster

We, the London Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Groups (LFAPTGs) welcome the establishment on Feb 10th 1990, of the All London Anti-Poll Tax Federation (ALAPTF).

A significant number of APT campaigns remain to be convinced of the integrity and genuinely representative nature of the new body, especially those who didn't attend on Feb 10th for this reason.

To ensure the above, we agree to work within the ALAPTF, and to work for the maximum solidarity, openness, democracy and accountability, as well as the minimum bureaucracy. The emphasis must be on serving the movement in the most useful, practical ways.

We therefore agree to:

1. Transfer all affiliations (APTs, TUs etc) to the new Federation.
2. Call on all borough-wide APTCs to attend the London Federation Committee meetings (monthly) with mandated delegates.
3. Recognise the autonomy of each local and borough-wide campaign to decide on all policies and activities.
4. Encourage direct communication and co-operation amongst APTCs, and support all useful initiatives - and agree that the new Federation should:
5. Produce an immediate, updated version of the London wide Address List of APTCs that we compiled last year, and distribute it to all borough APTCs before the second LF Committee meeting.
6. Produce full minutes of each meeting to be circulated within 10 days to all affiliated APTCs.
7. Agree that a Special London Conference of the Federation be convened within 1 month, with notice from a minimum of eleven Campaigns.

We also urge that:

8. Recent confusion caused by allegations of 'ghost' groups set up to enable 'packing' of borough and regional meetings, as well as 'competition' in some boroughs between two APT structures both claiming to be 'representative', be cleared up.
 - (a) All such practices should be discouraged.
 - (b) All campaigns to be recognised as bona fide (re: affiliations) that hold open, publicised, regular meetings (at least monthly).

formation of anti-poll tax unions at Yarrows and other workplaces is a very positive step forward which I hope will be followed.

The best thing to happen at the conference was that the afternoon session was devoted to workshops on the various aspects of the campaign (such as the law, publicity, organising etc). If they were all as good as the one I was at then it should become a regular feature at all conferences. I also think that if there were less speeches and rhetoric and more workshops/discussion forums then future conferences would be of even more use to local groups.

"Ask not what the federation can do for you, ask what you can do for the federation" - General F. Eeling.

Ian (Woodlands)

CONTACTS

All articles, letters and donations to:-

Refuse and Resist,
c/o Murray,
31 Leven St.,
Glasgow G41 2JD

or
Refuse and Resist,
2/3, 182 Ark Lane,
Glasgow G31 2JS

GROUP REPORTS

CLASS ANGER

A meeting to set up Yoker A.P.T.U. was held on Thursday 22nd March. 50 People turned out to hear Speakers from Dennistoun and Barmulloch College A.P.T.U.'s. Those in attendance enthusiastically supported non-payment. One man stated "If it comes to the bit I'll stop the Sheriff Officers at the door with the first thing that comes to hand".

The Meeting agreed to organise transport for the Demo.

Ian & Rachel (Yoker A.P.T.)
HUTCHIE O.K!

A friend tells us that a group of single parents based in Hutchestown and Oatlands recently banded together to launch an Anti Poll Tax Campaign. They held a Public Meeting on the 2nd of March and drew a few more people in with limited publicity.

They have now merged with an existing Gorbals APT group and have a Public Meeting on Thursday 29th March in the John Main Centre, with door-to-door leafleting throughout this previously neglected area. A 'hotline' contact number for the group is 429 3457.

WOODLANDS GROUP REPORT

Woodlands Against the Poll Tax successfully held a public meeting on the 20th of February on how to resist Warrant Sales. 20-30 people attended to hear Janette McGinn (from Glasgow) and Bob Blyth (from Edinburgh) giving experiences on the subject.

The major lesson to be learned from both their experiences of attempted Poindings (and others across the country) is that you need to be well organised locally before hand (and have effective communication between groups regionally). In order to do this, Woodlands has now decided to compile a Phone-Tree of contacts who will mobilise to stop all attempted Poindings or Warrant Sales in Woodlands or anywhere else. If you want to be included on the list then get in touch with us (see contact list for details).

As well as this we are continuing to hold our weekly organising meetings on Tuesdays 7.30 p.m. at 7 Lynedoch Street (Please feel free to come along and get involved) and having a Street Stall at the Co-op in Great Western Road every Saturday (weather and hangovers permitting) between 11.a.m. and 1.00 p.m.

We are also having a fund raising gig on Sunday April 1st at Glasgow Art School at which the Test Department will be playing. The tickets are £3/£5 and will be available on the night. Hopefully, see you there!!!!

Ian (Woodlands)

JIM I'LL FIX IT?

80 local residents packed out a school room in Ibrox on 12th March to show their support for continued Non-Payment and Resistance to collection of the hated Poll Tax.

Jim Sillars, the local M.P., preferred to applaud the Scots for discipline and warn against "agents provocateurs" intent on spreading violence. He spent most of his speech, however, on general support for Non-Payment and forming local Task Forces (as in Ibrox-Cessnock) to resist Poindings and Warrant Sales.

Keith Duncan of Sherwood Campaign Against the Poll Tax in Nottingham saw things differently. Part of the group dressed in Robin Hood costumes that invaded the Council Chamber on 5th March and 'pied' Councillors, he and other protestors were subject to the violence of the Police. Independent campaigns exist in four districts of Nottingham and sustain a far greater level of activity than some of the 'token' Militant organised groups.

Yet, the mood of the meeting naturally concentrated on the unity of action needed to mobilise to resist Collection. Over half of the 111 volunteered to get actively involved in supporting local activity such as joining the Task Force.

Apologist for Debt-Recovery, Helen McElhone, the Regional Councillor, failed to respond to our challenge to defend her support for "frightening people to pay up".

Keith (Ibrox-Cessnock APT)



POLLOKSHIELDS REPORT

P.A.P.T. has now drawn up a plan of action to protect local residents from the threat of warrant sales. A "phone tree" has been organised to contact supporters at short notice if a poinding is imminent, we have contingency plans to remove people's valuables, and we're drafting letters of ownership to protect the belongings of any person who wants to resist the Regional Council's attempts to recover the Poll Tax.

We are continuing to raise funds through pub collections as well as collections at the Tramway Theatre. We also have a ceilidh organised for the 27th April at the Pollokshields Burgh Hall. Last year's ceilidh was a great success. Once again we will be entertained by the Harlandshanker Ceilidh Band and there will be a late bar. Tickets for this event will be available in early April. Contact Margaret Murray on 423 8679 for details.

Margaret (Pollokshields)

'RANT & RAVE'

Local folk musician, Ken Caird, kicked off the recent Ibrox meeting with a couple of anti-poll tax songs, including the one about the disappearing Registration Officers in his cupboard. He also did us a favour by sitting down on the table in front of Jim Sillars and giving us a break from his Political Posturing.

The same Jim, however, is unhappy that the majority of the Govan Branch of the SNP have bodyswerved involvement in the Anti Poll Tax groups in Govan and Ibrox/Cessnock. He re-arranged a Branch meeting and kept them locked in a Govan hall till a meeting of Govan APT was due to start. Of course, if you surround yourself with opportunists, what do you expect?

THE PAWNS IN TOMMY'S GAME?

"Some people like to devote all their time to playing games like chess. Me? I like to play Politics!"

Tommy Armageddon
(Quoted in 'Scotland on Sunday' 11.3.90)

HUZZEY'S HAZZARDS

The Labour leader of Swindon's Thamesdown Council, Tony Huzzey, says he dislikes "Gesture Politics" such as Poll Tax Non Payment. However, Tony is not averse to a bit of gesture politics himself. When Thamesdown opened their new Council Building, they named it after the first Poll tax rebel - 'Wat Tyler House' - What was that about futile gestures Tony?!

JOKERS IN THE PACK

Watch out for bogus phone calls. Some of these have been coming from an unlikely source recently. 2 bogus callers to Dennistoun were given the group's number by jokers in the Glasgow Fed. office. When the group complained, they were greeted by giggles and "Oh they phoned you - we didn't expect them to!". Both these referrals to the group happened on the same day and were the first names that Dennistoun have received from the Federation since the group was set up 18 months ago.

Two members of Woodlands APT were in the toon on Saturday, 17th of March when they saw an unusual sight. At St. Enoch's Square they came upon a stall which they thought, at first, to be a Strathclyde Federation stall (since the Fed had said one would be there and since the people around were handing out Federation bulletins). However, as they neared it they saw that half of it was covered by Federation stuff and the rest by copies of "Militant" and what appeared to be some sort of Militant petition or membership forms. Being in a hurry they did not stop, but they did feel confused. Was the stall a Strathclyde Federation one or a Militant one? Was it both? Could they tell the difference?

Rest assured that an explanation for this will be got at the next aggregate. It will be interesting to hear a justification for this act. Watch this space for further details!!!!!!

SCOTIA BAR FUNDRAISER

The R & R fundraiser on 30th Jan was a resounding success. Those who attended had a great night & the funds raised exceeded every expectation.

With the proceeds of a raffle, T Shirt sales, and a very generous donation from the proprietors of the Scotia Bar, we raised £180.

This sum covered the cost of the 2nd issue, plus mailings, and a little left over. Another fundraiser to meet costs of the 3rd issue is in the pipeline.

As for the event itself, the bar was packed and there was a great atmosphere and the entertainers were marvelous. Special thanks to the main act, The Blarney Pilgrims, and to the Castlemilk writers, Karen Thomson and John McGarrigle. There was also many welcome contributions of music & poetry from the audience. Thanks to all who contributed.

R & R would also like to thank Cathy & Jannette, Pollokshields, who helped with the raffle, and, of course, the Scotia Bar staff.

Margaret (Pollokshields)

GROUPS

BARMULLOCH COLLEGE APT: Contact Paul, SRC Offices.

DENNISTOUN APT: Contact 2/3, 182 Ark Lane for details.

GOVAN: Hotline Nos. 445 6216/3585/2321/4894 and 440 2071/0437/2029/4300/5301

GRANGEMOUTH ANTI-POLL TAX GROUP:-
Helen Allan, 84 Oswald Ave., Grangemouth. (0324) 484344

IBROX/CESSNOCK A.P.T.: Meets fortnightly at Whitefield Rd. Community Hall. Secretary, D. MacKay, 32 Midlock St. Local 'Hotline' Numbers - 427 3691/6398/4109

POLLOKSHIELDS A.P.T.: 8 p.m. last Wednesday of month, PDA Hall, McCulloch St. Hotline - 423 0461/8679, 429 0336

POSSIL APT: 7 p.m. every Wednesday, Possil Community Council Flat, Sunnyslaw St. Contact A. McCormack 336 5359.

ROYSTON APT: Contact Duncan, 16/6, 40 Rosemount St. Royston.

WOODLANDS APT: Every Tuesday, Woodlands Trust, 7 Lyndoch St. 7.30 p.m. Secretary, C. Mercer, 30 Baliol St. G4. Local 'Hotline' Nos. 332 8124/8728; 333 9015

STOP PRESS: For last minute information or details of events requiring coverage by the editorial team call - 041 423 8679 or 427 6398

MAILING LIST

If you would like to receive **REFUSE & RESIST** on a regular basis, please complete the form below and return it to us together with 6 postage stamps. This will ensure a year's supply. **GROUPS:** if ordering large numbers, please send extra stamps.

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PHONE.....

No. Of Copies.....Stamps enclosed.....

DONATIONS

REFUSE & RESIST is a **FREE** publication and, as such, it is dependant on donations from groups and individuals.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY!!!

LETTERS

Things going very well in London, but much to do. Groups multiplying (although 40% of new groups are Militants and 1/2 of them are front/ghosts - but not all...).

About 1/2 of London boroughs have campaign. 'Non-payment' strategy is now pretty much 90% of the movement. Strongest groups are us (Haringey) and Lewisham (S.E. London), and possibly Lambeth (3 borough-wide tendencies, now holding 'joint committee' alliance meetings). London A.P.T. (Labour/Stalinist 'don't break law') is virtually collapsed, and we were trying to integrate them into our old London Federation.

Anyway, we've dissolved into the new organisation and its stronger, and seems ok despite Militant domination. Co-Chair is Jane, Tottenham A.P.T. Everyone behaved at 1st meeting..... 4 or 5 boroughs are planning saturation leafletting by April 1st. Haringey is going very well (no Milis to speak of), with 90,000 door-to-door deliveries underway. Strengthening grass roots groups/ reps networks now (including a Broadwater Farm group).

We like Refuse & Resist - could be really good country-wide bulletin.



TWINNED AGAINST THE POLL TAX

More & more independent minded groups are twinning with local groups in England and Wales. The British Federation should supply a National list of groups to make it easier. But, for the moment write to: Box 5, Hiziki, 15 Goosgate, NOTTINGHAM.

Dear friends,

We recently saw a copy of "R & R", and agree entirely with sentiments expressed in the article, "Open & Direct" on p.3, referring to the communication between groups.

We believe the campaign is being held back by the Militant habit of accumulating all posts and means of communication.

So, can you please send a copy of the London APT list of Poll Tax groups, enclosed is £5 towards the cost of producing "R & R".

S. Johnstone - Penhill APT

Dear friends,

A plea/suggestion; next issue can you print an A4 poster, as part of your centre pages, which could be photocopied by Glasgow groups?

It's now crucial to recruit more non-payers and to make sure that all non-payers know that a support network exists, so that they don't get frightened or picked off one by one..

I'm a freelance non-payer and only heard of the hotline by picking up a copy of R & R at a party. I bet most of the 33% aren't in an anti-Poll Tax group. Let's spread the phone hotline around.

much love, Chris Ballance. Ruchill

Dear Refusers,

Please send us a years supply of your publication, 10 copies each issue. We enclose £10 for postage and a donation. Keep up the good work.

yours, Andy. For CRAPT
Railton Rd. London.

Dear R & R,

Ta for the couple of R & R's you sent. I'd like 20 copies every issue if the enclosed cheque can cover the cost of postage.

We're delivering our non-payment leaflets to every house (50,000) in Norwich and other parts of Norfolk.

All going very smoothly. This is not a naturally militant area in either sense of the word. But we hope for about 30% non-payment.

We're starved of nationwide info because we're not joining Tommys club, but we get some from Danny Burns in Avon, and 3D.

Cheers, Martin. Norwich APT.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANKS to the following for all donations and support.

INDIVIDUALS: S. Johnstone, Chris Ballance, A. Dool (Swindon)

GROUPS: Prestonfield APT, Oxford APT, Brixton Comm. Resistance, Haringey APT, TGWU 6/389, Stock-Bridge/Newtown APT, Norwich APT, Hackney Solidarity Gp, Greenleaf (Bristol), Aberdeen APT.

POLLOKSHIELDS APT CEILIDH

FRIDAY 27 APRIL 8-12pm

POLLOKSHIELDS BURGH HALL

MAXWELL PARK

TEST DEPT

PLUS
SUPPORT

Sun 1st
April
Doors open at 8pm

AT
GLASGOW
ART
SCHOOL
(Renfrew St)

WORLD
MUSIC DISCO
BY CLUB
TERRA NERRA

£5/£3(Concession) TICKETS FROM: The Art School, Lost in Music,
Transmission Gallery, BAI, Iona and Echo Records.

A BENEFIT NIGHT FOR WOODLANDS AGAINST THE POLL TAX
Celebrate a Year of Non-Payment